

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method is disclosed for operating a mobile satellite telecommunications (MSTS) system, as is a system that operates in accordance with the method. In a MSTS having at least one user terminal, at least one satellite in earth orbit, and at least one gateway bidirectionally coupled to a data communications network, in response to a determination that at least one criterion being met, an indicator of the user terminal is activated for informing a user of a potential for reduced user terminal performance. The least one criterion can include comprised of a number of satellites through which a communication between the user terminal and the gateway is conducted, such as an occurrence of there being only one satellite through which the communication between the user terminal and the gateway is conducted, or a prediction of an occurrence that there will be only one satellite through which the communication between the user terminal and the gateway will be conducted. The criteria can further include an occurrence of an elevation angle between the one satellite and the user terminal falling below a minimum threshold value and/or an occurrence of a signal strength or signal quality of a link between the one satellite and the user terminal falling below a minimum threshold value. The user terminal is preferably responsive to received pilot channel signals for detecting a number of satellites through which a communication between the user terminal and the gateway is conducted. The indicator is preferably at least one of a visual indicator, a tactile indicator and an audible indicator. In one embodiment the determination that the at least one criterion has been met is made in the user terminal, while in another embodiment the determination is made in the gateway, preferably based at least in part on information transmitted to the gateway from the user terminal.